

to Washington and stopped by my office. Dr. Breiseth had been serving as the president of Wilkes University for about seven years at that point, and we had always enjoyed a good working relationship. In addition to our shared interest in national politics and social issues, we also spent a great deal of time discussing the challenges and opportunities facing Northeastern Pennsylvania. As a relative newcomer to the region, Chris provided me with a fresh perspective that managed to be both realistic and optimistic. During that visit in Washington, we talked about the need to clean up the environmental degradation from the coal mining industry, and I shared with Chris my dream of purchasing a parcel of land owned by a defunct coal company which had been tied up in bankruptcy for more than fifteen years. With his characteristic enthusiasm, Chris agreed to join me in establishing a non-profit organization to purchase this land, reclaim the mine-scarred portions, and redevelop it with the principles of what we now call "smart growth."

In early 1992, Chris and I recruited a group of community leaders to serve on the board of this new organization. Now that the Earth Conservancy is a well-respected local institution with a history of good work, it is hard to remember how difficult those early days were and how risky for all of our reputations. After an initial flurry of positive press reports, the fledgling Earth Conservancy soon became the target for intense scrutiny by the local media. As we struggled to obtain the federal funds necessary for the purchase of the land and worked through the legal labyrinth to free the land from bankruptcy, local reporters became convinced that we must be doing something nefarious. One newspaper made more than one hundred freedom of information act requests from various federal agencies, which effectively raised suspicion among the government officials within those agencies. I will be forever grateful to all of the original members of the Earth Conservancy board, but most especially to Chris Breiseth as the Chairman, for withstanding the intense pressure and continuing to believe in our dream.

That dream is now reality. The Earth Conservancy has reclaimed more than 800 acres of land, and has committed to preserve in open green space more than two-thirds of its total 16,000 acre holdings. Under the leadership of its CEO, Mike Dziak, the Earth Conservancy has reached out to every level of the community to use the asset of the land for the benefit of everyone. Local schoolchildren plant trees on Earth Conservancy land every year. Some small parcels of land have been donated to local municipalities and non-profit organizations for a wide variety of public projects, and the Earth Conservancy has welcomed local residents to use its land for rec-

reational purposes. At every step of the way, Chris provided strong and steady guidance to keep the organization devoted to its original goals. My trust in him was and is absolute, and the entire region of Northeastern Pennsylvania owes him an enormous debt of gratitude for the leadership he has provided to the Earth Conservancy.

After seventeen years as the president of Wilkes University, Chris Breiseth is moving on to new challenges. He will be president and chief executive officer of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute at Hyde Park, New York, where I have no doubt his depth of understanding as an historian will benefit all who find inspiration from the lives of these two great Americans.

Mr. Speaker, when Chris and Jane Breiseth came to Northeastern Pennsylvania with their three lovely daughters, Abigail, Erika, and Lydia, they truly made it their home. They volunteered their time and energy to countless community activities, and the region has been enriched by their presence. Every community in America should have the benefit of people like the Breiseths, who took a chance on a dream and made it happen.

TRIBUTE TO ASHLEY C. COLLOPY
FOR HER EXEMPLARY VOLUNTEER SERVICE

HON. JIM NUSSLE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2001

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, I write this tribute to commend Ashley Collopy for her exemplary service to her community. Ashley took the initiative to become involved in a local community service project that will strengthen the community and provide a better societal environment for all Iowan's.

It is exciting for me to see a young Iowan tap their endless potential and give something of great quality back to the community and state. While Ashley no doubt found this work very rewarding, I am sure that those in her community are also very grateful for her commitment.

I am very proud of Ashley's commitment to a better Iowa. Ashley is an outstanding young American, and is a person that other young people should look to as an example for what it means to be a leader. Ashley is a leader in her community and I have every confidence that she has the potential to be a leader in America's march to the future.

HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BOY SCOUT TROOP 103 IN BETHALTO, IL

HON. JERRY F. COSTELLO

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2001

Mr. COSTELLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the 50th anniversary of Boy Scout Troop 103 in Bethalto, IL.

Troop 103 of Bethalto, IL, is sponsored by the Bethalto United Methodist Church located at 240 East Sherman Street in Bethalto, IL. United Methodist has sponsored Troop 103 for the past 50 years. For Troop 103, there have been 10 former Scoutmasters and the Troop has produced 25 Eagle Scouts in their 50 years of existence and will soon add four more. This Troop has 27 active scouts that participate in many scouting activities throughout the year. They have participated in the annual Lincoln Pilgrimage in Springfield, IL, and also the Memorial Day Parade in Bethalto. Many former Scouts remain as business owners in the community of Bethalto.

The Boy Scouts of America was incorporated to provide a program for community organizations that offers effective character, citizenship and personal fitness training for youth. They endeavor to develop citizens who are physically, mentally and emotionally fit; have a high degree of self-reliance as evidenced in such qualities as initiative, courage and resourcefulness; have personal values based on religious concepts; have the desire and skills to help others; understand the principles of the American social, economic and governmental systems; are knowledgeable about and take pride in their American heritage and understand our nation's role in the world; and are prepared to participate in and give leadership to American Society.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Troop 103 on the occasion of their 50th anniversary and to recognize their service to the community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. KAREN MCCARTHY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 7, 2001

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, during rollcall vote No. 98, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."